

# Executive Summary

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## State Long-Term Planning

The Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee initiated a study of the state's long-term planning efforts in March 2007. The study was prompted by requests from nonprofit agencies, including Connecticut Voices for Children, following a poor rating given in 2005 by the Governance Performance Project. The C- grade Connecticut received in the area that includes long-term planning reinforced perceptions that Connecticut does not have a proactive approach to establishing public policy, but rather focuses on reacting to crises.

Committee staff developed a series of eight questions to frame and guide the study, and a definition of long-term planning was also developed. For purposes of the study, this was defined as a comprehensive planning process that establishes a broad vision for the future of the state and its residents. It involves planning for at least five years into the future, outlines broad long-range goals and objectives, and also includes strategic planning to reach those goals and objectives, and measures the progress of the state and individual agencies toward meeting those goals and objectives.

The study found that historically Connecticut has had some periods where long-range planning was a priority. However, for more than a decade planning has not been a focus, and the committee found the state's long-term planning process deficient because it:

- has not been a priority of the executive branch for more than a decade;
- features a compartmentalized, fragmented approach;
- emphasizes decentralized single-policy area planning;
- has no clear vision for where the state wishes to be in 20 years (or some long-term period) or how it intends to get there;
- focuses more attention on physical-type planning for land use etc., than on human resource planning;
- appears ill-equipped in terms of organization structure and centralized staffing capacity to coordinate or conduct comprehensive planning;
- is episodic in that laws are passed periodically that create commissions or task forces to develop plans, but implementation and oversight functions are not clear; and
- is recognized as inadequate by many Connecticut towns.

The study examined what the models and best practices are for conducting long-term planning by examining the literature and contacting many other states. As a result, a list of best practices, or indicators of success was developed and is presented in the report. When

information concerning these models and practices was discussed at the committee briefing and hearings held in September, committee members were interested in hearing first-hand from some model states. In November the committee sponsored such a forum, at which a national expert on state long-term planning and two representatives from states that engage in long-term planning provided information on their experience. Much of the study recommendations are based on the information, materials and discussion covered that day. The committee concluded, however, that the recommendations establish a framework for an ongoing process, rather than just creation of a body that will produce a document and go away. The committee recognizes that this process will take time to develop and for those involved to see the value of engaging in it. With sustainability of the process a primary focus, the recommendations developed propose a manageable, slow approach.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Creation of an Oversight Body**

**There shall be a Council on Connecticut's Future created by October 1, 2008. The council shall be composed of 18 members:**

- **three from the executive branch including the lieutenant governor, who shall be chairman, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, and one agency commissioner appointed by the governor;**
- **six legislative leaders – the speaker of the house; the president pro tempore of the senate; the majority leaders of the house and the senate; and the minority leaders of the house and the senate; and**
- **nine public members – three appointed by the governor and six appointed by the legislative leaders, one by each of the six leaders—who shall serve four-year terms.**

**The council should meet monthly. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments, and a majority of the council shall constitute a quorum.**

### **2. Major Council Duties**

**The council shall be responsible for developing a planning process for setting a direction for the future of Connecticut. That process shall include some or all of the following sequential steps: 1) developing a long-term vision; 2) conducting a situational analysis of Connecticut and core state services (e.g., analyzing strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats); 3) establishing a limited number of overarching goals for Connecticut in the first year of operation and expanding the goals in a timeline established by the council; 4) setting long-term objectives for state services and aligning state services to the long-term objectives; 5) instituting a planning and performance measurement system consisting of strategic planning, performance measurement, and evaluation of progress toward goals; 6) establishing plan adjustments as needed; and 7) reporting annually to the legislature and the governor on progress toward goals.**

### **3. Location, Structure, and Staffing**

**The Policy Development and Planning Division of the Office of Policy and Management shall provide staff assistance to the council. Additional assistance as needed, and upon request from the council, shall be provided by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee, the Auditors of Public Accounts, the Office of Fiscal Analysis, and the Office of Legislative Research.**

**To ensure there is adequate staffing to the council, five analyst positions shall be added to the current Policy Development and Planning Division within the Office of Policy and Management. The analysts shall report to the undersecretary of that division, and the undersecretary shall be responsible for the day-to-day activities of the analysts and for their overall performance of council-related duties.**

**Three of the analysts shall be knowledgeable in a broad array of state policy areas including health care, the environment, education, and social services, as well as have experience and training in goal-setting, strategic planning, and performance measurement. These three analysts shall have primary responsibility for assisting the council in:**

- developing a vision for the state;**
- establishing broad goals in a select number of areas, requiring agency strategic plans around those goals and creating a phase-in schedule to include additional goals in the future;**
- developing a timetable for the council in terms of its ongoing duties;**
- assisting state agencies, on a phased-in schedule, with the development of strategic plans that help achieve one or more of the overarching goals, and identify manageable and realistic measures to evaluate progress;**
- coordinating data collection among state agencies needed to measure the goals, and interpret and summarize the agencies' performance information to the council;**
- assisting the council in tracking results, and identifying opportunities to report on progress and other methods of ensuring the process is transparent and accountable at every phase;**
- developing and implementing broad-based, long-term demographic, economic and critical financial trends that affect public policy;**
- working collaboratively with other initiatives underway in Connecticut to improve strategic planning and government performance (e.g., P.A. 07-239 and P.A. 07-3 and Results-based Accountability); and**
- researching, identifying and keeping current with best practices in state management, performance measurement, and accountability.**

Two other analysts shall have knowledge in quantitative analysis, and computer hardware and software applications. These analysts would merge, analyze, and report on large databases to determine results, and would also be responsible for:

- development of a council website that provides information to the public on overall progress toward state goals in a user-friendly and informative way; and
- development of similar computer-based progress reporting for state agencies' strategic planning and progress measures (as each state agency is required on a phase-in schedule to develop strategic plans and develop and report on measures, with the assistance of the planning and policy-oriented analysts.)

The council shall work with the Connecticut State Data Center at the University of Connecticut. The State Data Center, operating under a memorandum of agreement with the Office of Policy and Management, currently maintains all Connecticut data issued by the U.S. Census Bureau, and performs all population projections for the state. The memorandum of agreement shall be modified so that broad-based data analysis on this demographic information would be provided, as the council requests. The State Data Center shall also assist the council with its other broad data needs, such as merging data collected by a variety of state agencies using different systems and databases and analyzing and reporting on the information so that it can be used by the council and staff in measuring progress toward the state goals and improving state government accountability.

#### **4. Transparency and Accountability**

To promote transparency and accountability, the program review committee recommends that:

- The schedule of all council meetings should be posted on the council's website and, as much as possible, that the meeting location be at the Legislative Office Building so that the meetings can be televised on Connecticut Network (CT-N).
- One council meeting each quarter shall be devoted to measuring and reporting on progress toward one of the overarching state goals. All state agency commissioners responsible for strategic plans and objectives connected to that goal or outcome shall be required to attend and report on progress in achieving the goal, or what obstacles are preventing better, faster progress.